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ABSTRACT

Presenting classroom experiences and a process to help writing teachers see their own hard-to-reach students with new eyes, this book tells the story of a 6-year action research project committed to building classroom environments where cultural differences are affirmed and high achievement is fostered among all students. The book notes that the action research project was begun by middle- and high-school teachers who refused to accept the chronic underachievement of African American student writers in the midwestern suburb of Webster Groves, Missouri. The book concludes that the teachers realized that instead of trying to "fix" the students, they needed to "fix" their teaching methods, the ambience of their classrooms, and their own cultural awareness. Chapters in the book are: (1) Adjusting the Mirrors; (2) Story of an Action Research Team; (3) Close-Up Views; (4) Build on Strengths; (5) Use Process Approaches to Writing; (6) Individualize and Personalize; (7) Encourage Cooperative Learning; (8) Increase Control of Language; (9) Use the Computer; (10) Foster Involvement with Writing and Reading; (11) Build Bridges, Expand Horizons; (12) Changes in Student Writing; (13) Changes in Student Attitudes; and (14) Future Changes--for Us and the Reader. Brief autobiographical essays of teachers follow each of the chapters 4 through 11. Appendixes present sample lessons on literature study groups, thumbprint narratives, thumbprint essays, and dramatic monologue; a history of holistic assessment in Webster Groves School District; a 51-item list of recommended student literature; and team member biographies. (RS)

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